AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Listing of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An electromechanical switching device, comprising:

a main contact including a number of main fixed contacts and a moveable main contact bridge;

an auxiliary contact which leads during the switch-on process and which includes a number of auxiliary fixed contacts and a moveable auxiliary contact bridge; and

a contact bridge carrier, provided for actuating the main contact bridge and the auxiliary contact bridge,

wherein at least one of the contacts ~~are~~is mounted in a sprung manner,

wherein two stable positions of the auxiliary contact bridge relative to the contact bridge carrier are provided, ~~and~~

wherein, when the switching device is switched on, the auxiliary contact bridge in its first stable position closing the auxiliary contact which leads the main contact by the contact bridge carrier being actuated, and

wherein, when the switching device is switched off, the auxiliary contact with the auxiliary contact bridge located in the second stable position opening before the main contact by the contact bridge carrier being actuated in the opposite direction.

2. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 1, wherein, during the switch-on process, the auxiliary contact bridge is movable over into its second stable position via the mechanical action of the auxiliary fixed contacts on the auxiliary contact bridge.

3. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 2, wherein, during the switch-on process, the change, which is triggered by the actuation of the contact bridge carrier, between the first and the second stable position of the auxiliary contact bridge once the main contact has closed, can trigger an opening of the auxiliary contact.

4. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 1, wherein, during the switch-off process, the auxiliary contact bridge is movable over into its first stable position via the mechanical action of at least one stop on the auxiliary contact bridge.

5. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the auxiliary contact bridge is in the form of a snap-action spring.

6. (Currently Amended) An electromechanical switching device, comprising:

a main contact including a number of main fixed contacts and a moveable main contact bridge;

an auxiliary contact which leads during the switch-on process and which includes a number of auxiliary fixed contacts and a moveable auxiliary contact bridge; and

a contact bridge carrier, for actuating the main contact bridge and the auxiliary contact bridge,

wherein at least one of the contacts is mounted in a sprung manner,

wherein two stable positions of at least one auxiliary fixed contact are provided, ~~and~~

wherein, when the switching device is switched on, the auxiliary contact bridge making contact with the auxiliary fixed contact in its first stable position by the contact bridge carrier being actuated and in the process closing the auxiliary contact before the main contact, and

wherein, when the switching device is switched off, the auxiliary contact with the auxiliary fixed contact located in the second stable position opening before the main contact by the contact bridge carrier being actuated in the opposite direction.

7. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 6, wherein, during the switch-on process, the auxiliary fixed contact is movable over into its second stable position via the mechanical action of the auxiliary contact bridge on the auxiliary fixed contact.

8. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 7, wherein, during the switch-on process, the change, which is triggered by the actuation of the contact bridge carrier, between the first and the second stable position of the auxiliary fixed contact once the main contact has closed, can trigger an opening of the auxiliary contact.

9. (Currently Amended) The switching device as claimed in claim 6, wherein, during the switch-off process, the auxiliary fixed contact ~~movies~~ is movable over into its first stable position via mechanical action of at least one stop on the auxiliary fixed contact.

10. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the auxiliary fixed contact is in the form of a snap-action spring.

11. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 6, wherein two auxiliary fixed contacts are arranged at least approximately symmetrically with respect to the contact bridge carrier.

12. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the main contact bridge and the auxiliary contact bridge are arranged at least approximately parallel to one another.

13. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of the contact bridges is arranged at least approximately perpendicular to the contact bridge carrier.

14. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the auxiliary contact bridge is mounted in the contact bridge carrier at a suspension point, which cannot be displaced relative to the contact bridge carrier.

15. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 2, wherein, during the switch-off process, the auxiliary contact bridge is movable over into its first stable position via the mechanical action of at least one stop on the auxiliary contact bridge.

16. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 3, wherein, during the switch-off process, the auxiliary contact bridge is movable over into its first stable position via the mechanical action of at least one stop on the auxiliary contact bridge.

17. (Currently Amended) The switching device as claimed in claim 7, wherein, during the switch-off process, the auxiliary fixed contact ~~movies~~is movable over into its first stable position via mechanical action of at least one stop on the auxiliary fixed contact.

18. (Currently Amended) The switching device as claimed in claim 8, wherein, during the switch-off process, the auxiliary fixed contact ~~movies~~is movable over into its first stable position via mechanical action of at least one stop on the auxiliary fixed contact.

19. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the main contact bridge and the auxiliary contact bridge are arranged at least approximately parallel to one another.

20. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 6, wherein at least one of the contact bridges is arranged at least approximately perpendicular to the contact bridge carrier.

21. (Previously Presented) The switching device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the auxiliary contact bridge is mounted in the contact bridge carrier at a suspension point, which cannot be displaced relative to the contact bridge carrier.

22. (New) An electromechanical switching device, comprising:

a main contact including a main fixed contact and a moveable main contact bridge;

an auxiliary contact which leads during a switch-on process and which includes an auxiliary fixed contact and a moveable auxiliary contact bridge; and

a contact bridge carrier for actuating the main contact bridge and the auxiliary contact bridge,

wherein one of the auxiliary fixed contact and the auxiliary contact bridge is a sprung contact that has a first stable position and a second stable position,

wherein, when the switching device is switched on, the sprung contact in the first stable position closes the auxiliary contact before the main contact is closed, and

wherein, when the switching device is switched off, the auxiliary contact with the sprung contact in the second stable position opens before the main contact is opened.